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# He is Enthusiastic ROB M'GREGOR.

By MARTHA M'OULLOCH WILLIAMS.

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CHAPTER XVII.

Lawyer Howell was certainly a cool hand. Though Mr. Topmark awakened him at daylight the next morning for a conference that ought to have set him in a flutter, he came to breakfast sleek and serene as ever, albeit he had talked freely with Mrs. Annis and her niece.

He was in holiday temper, well pleas-ed with himself and all about him. Though he fancied himself a bachelor confirmed, he had still a semihuman delight in the young of his species, especially when they had spotless faces and wore fresh white pinafores and had a habit of speech quaintly frank and diverting. Then, too, the green country charmed him. It had such wonderful harmonies of tint and tone. The happy babble of water slipping past was music to his ears.

"The day is a concrete idyl," he said to himself about 11 o'clock, tipping back his chair so far he half lay at ease in it. "It is truly a case of 'all save the spirit of man is divine.' Can Topmark be such a fool as to think I do not see what cards he thinks he holds and how he means to play them? It is astonishing, his infatuation, or rather it would be if the girl were merely pretty. She is so very much more-one of the women men die for-I myself might be rather hard hit if she would look at me as a human being. She did not last night. I was merely a new sort of animal about whom she was not even curious. She had something on her mind. I wonder -ne. I worder most how my respected



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No, I am sure I could not afford to love her, even with Roscoe secure. My wife must put success before everything. This girl will never do that. She will never do anything indeed that does not square with a sense of honor almost fantastic. A hard one to drive, she. If Mr. Topmark thinks otherwise, he is letting himself in for a very bad half hour. He is the shrewdest blunderer-Oh, ho! Here he comes, looking like the

Mr. Topmark had indeed a face of fury as he dropped into a chair and wiped his forehead with his hand. The hand shook and his breath came a thought unevenly as he said through his set teeth:

"Well, from the looks er things, Howell, you'll have ter take that case an try ter put Miss Magnolyer Tubbs, gran' daughter of Naomi Pickins, deceased in possession er her rights."

"Ah!" said Mr. Howell, half closing his eyes. They were too wide awake. "Don't bring up business today. It seems made for idleness." "Oh, any time you please! It's your business, not mine," Mr. Topmark said,

with a short laugh. Mr. Howell laughed, too, languidly and in a half apologetio fashion, as he said: "Pardon the correction, but if this is

not your business it certainly is not "Say, what in the nation air you drivin at?" Mr. Topmark asked angrily. Mr. Howell's face grew more than ever

tranquil as he replied:
"I thought I was explicit enough; but, if I must speak plainer, I begin work only upon receipt of a suitable retainer, and Miss Tubbs says, with admirable candor, she has not \$10 to her

"Well, what er that? Sue fer half you'recover, " Mr. Topmark said sulkily. Again the lawyer smiled.

"I think I need not tell one so well informed as yourself," he said silkenly, "that law is not an exact science. and that in contingent cases one is never certain of not having his trouble for his

"Confound you!" Mr. Topmark growled. "I've done let you inter this, an you know you can bleed me. All you lawyers is reg'ler leeches, though-as well you as ernother. "

"I thought you would hear reason," Mr. Howell returned, with a bow. "Now, let's get our bearings, so to speak. I judge you wish very greatly to marry the heiress of Roscoe'

"It ain't that," Topmark broke in. "It mought er been at first. Befo' my wife died I did want the land, but now"-

"I understand," the lawyer said. "But, I repeat, you wish to marry the heiress of Roscoe? You wish, too, that that person shall turn out to be Miss Rob McGregor, but only after she has become Mrs. Topmark?'

"Yes - no - I don't hardly know. You've got me flustered with your fine talk. But I'll tell you plain jest whar an how I stan with her. I been thar this mornin; found her so took up with er passel er nasty little turkeys I couldn't scasely git er word with her. She 'peared moughty bright, though, sorter on aidge, as you may say. So I waited, talkin ter the ole man, until I seen her slip off out ter the p'ar trees. Then I chased off arter her; found her flingin sticks an rocks up in 'em an p'ars jest rainin down at every throw she made. Then she up an said how lazy she was -any industrious body'd climb an pick the fruits onbruised, as they was fer p'serves. Then I up an said I'd git up thar, though I wa'n't quite er boy, an she laughed real tantalizin an said she couldn't let the father er a fam'ly resk hisself that way. Then she kep' on throwin an set me ter pick up what she knocked down. An laugh! You oughter er heard her when them fruits come dancin an hoppin over my bald head. But arter a bit she says:

"Let's go in the grape arbor an rest. I'm 'fraid you'll have apoplexy. I cain't have your death on my conscience.'

"So in we went an set on the two turf benches, her one side, me the other. She

had her apern full er p'ars an flung one over ter me, sayin: " 'Have er p'ar, Mr. Topmark. I'm

shore you've earned it.' "Then I sorter aidged round ter lettin on I wanted ernother sort er p'ar, an she flung up her head an laughed an said:

"'Oh, Mr. Topmark, jest fer er change, now, k'pose you was ter talk sense ter me! I know it would improve your health. " 'Oh,' says I, 'then you wanter talk

business? I'm agreeable. Jest you fire srway.'

"An she says, lookin over my head, 'I can't talk your sorter business, 'cause I ain't got none er my own, an other folks' is clean out er the question.'

" 'Why,' says I, 'everybody thinks you've got er heap er business-heap too much fer er pretty young thing like

"An then she held up her hand, sayin: 'Stop! You know business is buyin an sellin an payin debts. Now, I've nothin ter buy right now, thank God, next ter nothin ter sell sence the colt was stole an not er debt in the world. In fact, I can't git in debt. Nobody'd trust me fer 10 cents. They know they couldn't tetch the land fer it-that's all we've got-an I'd shoot the man that would name sale er mortgage ter dad-

dy.'
"'You oughter be rich with all this land,' says I. 'Wouldn't you like ter be?
It's wuth er fortune ef it was managed

right. "Then she thought er minit an flung her arms over her head, sayin: 'Yes, I do want money, er heap of it, ernough to make some rascals suffer an give daddy an the dogs an all the black folks

er good time.' 'You ain't namin nothin fer yourself,' I says. 'Shorely you want somethin ef it ain't no mo'n fine weddin

clothes. "An then she laughed-she's jest like quicksilver-an says she: 'Oh, Mr. Top-JOHNSON & HENDERSON. mark, Mr. Topmark! How can you tan- ter settle."

talize me so! You know Ct ever 1 mult in love with anybody he'll be shore ter have mothers an sisters an cousins an aunts that'll hate me on the face er earth. They'll oben hate the ground I walk on; so I'll have ter dry up inter the ugliest little old maid. I reckon I'll blow away in the end. Thar ain't no chance er me dyin, like anybody ought when they're crossed in love. You ought ter be sorry fer me instid er makin me

sorry fer myself.' " 'No, I'm sorry fer myself,' says I 'You've done sawed me off short every tetch, but I'm bound ter say er feller that could git you wouldn't mind ef all the other women in the world was mad ernough ter die over it.'

" 'I oughter say thanky, sir,' says 'But I thought we'd agreed ter

"'Oh, no,' says I. 'It was business, an, whether er no, I mean ter tell you my comin here so much means business. Then I drapped on my knees an tried ter git er hold of her hand, but she jumped erway an flung er handful er them p'ar fruits right in my face. One of 'em was so meller it stuck on the end er my nose, an when she seen that she laughed till she cried. But soon she set her head up, an says she in her high

way:
"I don't wanter seem inhospitable, Mr. Topmark, but you must know that you can never have anything ter say ter me that would not be better said where all the world might hear it. Good day, sir! I cain't ask you in the house. have got a heap er other things ter do.' And with that she left me so mad I couldn't see straight, not knowin hardly whether I'd ruther kill her er ask her ter walk on me.

"It must have tried your temper-such impertinence," Mr. Howell said, yet laughed behind his hand at the thought of Mr. Topmark with the pear on his "Pardon me if I seem impertinose. nent," he went on, "but you had better tell me your whole mind toward the other one. Miss Magnolia Tubbs is not bad looking, but she impresess me as being-well, a trifle hard mouthed and more than a trifle skittish."

"You're right. But she's got her match-that thar Noch. He's the devil. Besides, he's got the upper hand. The gal's been unfortunit. Thar's er child, you see. Till I found that out thar might er been two choices fer me. Noch wouldn't have the land as er gracious gift, so she-Magnolyer-is crazy ter git money. Say, you go right over ter Roscoe termorrer mornin. Ask fer the ole man. Ef you insist you won't talk only ter him, it'll skeer that little vixen wusser'n anything. But don't tell him. Talk ter her. Don't beat erbout the bush. Say right out you've been asked ter take the case an how I've tried ter keep you from tetchin it an only give in after you promised ter try an comper-



she cried,"

mise. Name er whoppin big sum. Say \$5,000, though I'll git the thing settled fer \$2,000. Say I begged an plead with you ter let the ole man at least live out his days in peace, an you'd like ter do it, only business is business, an you ain't the only lawyer"-

"One would think I was hardly a lawyer from the minuteness of your instructions," Mr. Howell said, bringing his chair down upon all its four legs. "I think I can be trusted with the diplomatic part. What I want is a clear statement of facts and your connection with them."

"In jest so many words the facts is these," Mr. Topmark said: "Roscoe land was took up from gov'ment survey with money her father had give that ole woman, Naomi Pickins, when she got married. Ef she ever j'ined in the deeds ter the McGregors, thar ain't no papers ner records ter prove, though the Mc-Gregors say she did do it. But the only one knowin ter that is the ole man hisself, an Rob won't let him be pestered with this ef she kin any way help it. Now, yere comes Naomi Pickins' gran'daughter, Magnolyer Tubbs, only heir so fer's I know, wantin ter git her rights. But she don't want the land, an I do. I want likewise the gal that thinks she owns it an know I cain't git her unless I work my files pretty sharp. She cain't fight the case. Law an jestice cost money. That she ain't got. Ef she'll let me stan' her friend"—

"But if she will not let you stand her friend, and if Magnolia should discover how much better a bargain she could make"- Mr. Howell began, but Topmark cut him short.

"I'll git the land, no matter what Rob McGregor does," he said, rising heavily. "That's certain. As fer that other one, you don't know Noch. Ef she turned rusty, he'd think nothin er puttin her out in the swamp, with er knife ercross her throat, like he's done -well, some other things. An Noch, he dassen't git me down on him. No, sir-ee! I know too much."

"Then it is settled that I make a first move tomorrow?" Mr. Howell asked, also rising. He did not mark the sudden, curious grayness about Topmark's mouth, but he wondered a little that it was a full minute before that gentleman

answered slowly: "Yes, an ef you bring back word that she wants ter see me right off it'll be with \$50 extry ter you when we come

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shan't have no o trouble with this

"Thank you, but that is wholly im-possible," Robaid, a deep scarlet stain-

ing her palled free, "so impossible,"

she went on, "we will forget what you

"What makes it impossible?" Top-

Rob shivered t intly, then drew back

saying, "The face that I am myself and

In spite of her deep trouble, Rob broke

You don't know how guilty I shall feel

Her laughing provoked Mr. Topmark

beyond words, more than even her stead-

fast refusal of himself. She could thus

whistle him and his money down the

wind with rain staring her in the face.

It must be she did not realize what she

was about. He had spoken fair words.

Now he must try what virtue lay in

"You say you love your ole father,"

he began, "Thar won't be many ter be-

"Perhaps," Rob said, though she got

"We must agree on somethin er else

kin give er cise the road an the world

lookin at you as the dust under its feet!

Choose quick too. You've tried me long

"Choice is impossible," Rob said, her

face white and scornful, "since nothing

else on earth could be to me so hard, so

degrading, so entirely unbearable, as

rough ones

him out er it. "

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yere rascally go un'

mark asked dozgodly.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

Mr. Howell came back from Roscoe with the look of a whipped hound, though he brought Mr. Topmark the wished for message. But when he had delivered it he went en: "You have not got a nice job before you, Topmark. That young woman will not be bullied, even by you. Confound her! She came nearer putting me in a blue funk than ever a supreme judge did. I shall not you yourseif."
"You're the only woman round yere
I couldn't have for the askin," Mr. Topknow whether to envy or pity you if you get your own way with her, of which I have my doubts."

mark began in his most aggrieved voice. Mr. Topmark was more hopeful when he saw Rob, white and heavy eyed. She into a laugh and answered gayly: "I have not the least doubt of it. Dear Mr. made no pretense of greeting, but went straight at the heart of things. "I want money, \$5,000," she said. "You know Topmark, do go and take one of them. what for. Will you let me have it and if I think myself the occasion of so extake the land for it when it comes to be cellent a husband going to waste.' mine?"

"Well, you see, \$5,000 is er heap er money, er mighty heap er money," Mr. Topmark answered slowly. "It would be the wust sort er thing fer my business ter sink that much in er remainder in trus'. But then thar ain't nothin hardly I won't try ter do ter 'blige good neighbors. Fact is, I been tryin ter jew down that thar lawyer. I told him he hadn't no conscience whatever''-

"So he said," Rob broke in. "Excuse lieve that when they see him in the me, but I am so anxious. "Mr. Toppoorhouse an know you could er kept mark, please say simply yes or no. If you cannot oblige me, I must try elsewhere. I sent for you because I know white to the lips. "But it seems to me, you have ready may. Besides the place lies so it is the more to you Mr. Topmark, we had better say no more. We are not likely to agree, and it than most people."

is utterly feelish to quarrel." . "Yes, I'm bound ter say it is," Mr. Topmark admitted impartially, with it'll be the wust day's work was ever done for you an him," Mr. Topmark althe air of one conferring a favor. you see, er remainder in trus'- I ain't most shouted. "You think, I reckon, meanin the least disrespec', Miss Rob. other help will come. I tell you it I know your word's better'n er bond. won't, it shan't. I can give you er But the place won't be yours till the ole name as will shes every door in the gentleman's gone. S'pesin you died county in your face. Now, take your choice-be r.y wife, have all that life

"You shall not suppose such a thing," Rob said, with a quick shiver. "To do it would be to deny the mercy of God. I shall live to take care of him. I will do it in spite of everything. What you have said, though, shows me the case is hopeless, so far as it concerns you. I can only beg your pardon for having trou-"You know it ain't no trouble, not

even the contemplation for one minute of being your wife." the least. Why, Miss Rob, I'd do jest Mr. Topmark swung upon his heel and came face to face with Aunt Phemy, anything fer you an glad er the chance," Mr. Topmark said eagerly. "Now, don't who had been standing just outside the you fret an think you're goin ter be grape arbor throughout the interview. turned out er house an home. That The old woman was still speechless. shan't never happen while Ben Top-Otherwise she showed no sign of the mark's yours ter command"cowardly midnight attack. Rob had al-"Excuse me. You must know I can-

most forced her to come and share Mam not accept any but such help as n Liza's house in a corner of the yard. come strictly in the way of business," Rob said, her eyes beginning to shine. "Forgive me if I seem bold, Mr. Topmark, but I must say in justice to myself that in thus applying to you I took account not of your gallautry, but of your well known shrewdness. I am of-fering you for \$5,000 what I know you want very much and otherwise would not get at all."

"You mean jest Roscoe, I s'pose," Mr. Topmark said, grinning. "I do want it, Miss Rob, but, Lord, not half, not er hundredth part, as bad as I want you. Now, don't you try ter stop me. You sent fer me, remember. I got er right ter speak. I know you don't keer nothin in the world erbout me, an I'm er fool ter keep on arter you like I do. I ain't no handsome young sprig ter take your fancy. Neither I ain't er p'ison snake. So you jest say you'll eben con-sider me, an I pledge you my word you

She had been shelling peas in the arbor while Rob talked with the lawyer that morning. Now she stood looking at Mr. Topmark with the eye of a basilisk. Thrice she nodded at him, then raised her hand and pointed him away. "Out er my way, you ole witch!" he shouled, rushing past her. Rob had sunk, shaken and breathless, upon the turf seat within. The old woman went to her and softly stroked her head, then

hands and looked into the eyes as though she tried to comfort her. A tall shadow fell across the sunny door. Jack Talbot came through it and sat down beside Rob, saying:

took the girl's face between her two

"My mysterious passenger sent you a message, Rob—a message more mysteri-ous than even himself. He bade me say to you, 'Darkness is coming, with light behind.' What do you make of that? Do you think he was crazy?"

"I hope not," Rob said, trying to speak steadily. "The darkness has come, Jack, quickly enough. Let us hope the light will follow." Before Jack could answer Aunt Phe-

my caught Rob's hand and kissed it, with smiles all over her deeply wrinkled Fate sometimes disposes of her might-

iest men by means of trifles light as air. Not that Miss Winfold was a trifle. Perish the insinuation! But if Lawyer Howell had not chosen to ride abroad just when and where he did, he would certainly not have encountered her and -and- But let the event be duly chronicled.

The lawyer rode, soliloquizing, half aloud: "George, but Topmark is a jolly fool! He thinks be can tame that pretty piece of pride. Confound it! I wish I had not seen her. I want to throw up the case when I think of her eyes. Of course I shall not do it. But who without seeing her would ever understand Topmark's infatuation? The wonder is that, having seen her, I no longer wonder over it. She might be dangerous to me, only she sees too far into me. Then there is that stubborn fact-Jack Talbot. Only a fool would overlook him. But the other one, Topmark's nieceshe's almost as astonishing, considering the stock she springs from. What a way she has! It was worth a lot to see how she cooed and purred the other night. I might think of calling there, only I hope to get out of this tomorrow at the latest."

Sound of other hoofs here made him

I hroat Coughs Is there a tickling in the

throat? Do you cough a great deal, especially when lying down? Are you hoarse at times? Does nearly every cold you take settle in your throat? These "throat coughs" are very deceptive. Don't neglect them. Troches, or cough syrups won't touch the spot. You must take remedies that will enrich the blood, tone up the nerves; and heal the in-flamed membranes.

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